



News Release #18 – Friday Update

For release at 12:30 p.m.
December 6, 2019

Beaumont, Texas – Unified Command reports ongoing response efforts at TPC Group Port Neches Operations remain focused on safely bringing the event to an end.

Situational update: Response efforts continue to focus on activities to secure site equipment and minimize impact to the environment, while preserving the safety of emergency responders. This morning, we have identified small fires in the impacted area on site. These small residual fires were anticipated and are being contained. Response teams continue to monitor and assess. Smoke may be visible.

As reported yesterday (Thursday), the fire impacted 12 tanks on site. Plans are underway to safely transport all remaining materials from the site, based on mechanical integrity inspections. All tanks containing materials are being evaluated and prioritized for action. To further secure and safely transfer remaining materials from the site, technical experts with TPC Group will introduce inhibitors to stabilize materials in impacted tanks. Options to safely transport materials from the site are being assessed.

Air Monitoring update: On Thursday, following the identification of a probable source of butadiene in the air and air monitoring measurements, responders on site repaired a leaking pressure relief valve on an impacted tank. Air monitoring around the site and in the community immediately showed significant reductions of butadiene levels following this repair operation. Unified Command remains diligent in efforts to monitor air quality around the site and in the community. Unified Command, comprised of federal, state, local agencies and TPC Group, has been conducting stationary and roaming air monitoring since the event occurred, and will continue to do so through the course of the response. Nearly 100 environmental experts, representing multiple agencies and groups, are on this response in the community performing air assessments at numerous locations and 40+ stationary air monitors are active. Monitoring coverage extends throughout the county and is providing real-time air quality data.

Occasional elevated air measurements may continue to register as response teams secure the site. Since 5:30 p.m. yesterday (Thursday), experts with the Center for Toxicology and Environmental Health (CTEH), contracted by TPC Group, have collected readings from more than 3,000 air samples. Only two of the readings measured elevated concentrations (0.5 and 0.7 ppm) of butadiene were sustained for

Commented [AA1]: Should the materials be secured in transportable containers onsite prior to transportation? Or secured in containers and stored onsite prior to transporting?

Commented [AA2]: All tanks or the impacted tanks?

Commented [AA3]: Protect? Secure? Protect/secure from what?

Commented [AA4]: Where? In the community? On-site?

Commented [AA5]: Is this a compound sentence? If so, add a comma after "locations". If this is not a compound sentence, please delete "are active."

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Commented [AA6]: That TPC contracted?

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Commented [AA7]: Samples? Or air monitoring readings?

Commented [AA8]: Are you referring to Air monitoring or air sampling?? Big difference.

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five to seven minutes, then quickly dissipated according to secondary readings in response. Short-term exposure to concentrations less than 10 ppm for one hour or less is not expected to produce health effects other than mild, reversible irritation.

As a reminder, breathing or inhaling airborne butadiene can cause sensory irritation or temporary discomfort and nuisance-type health impacts. Butadiene levels detected near the facility and in the community throughout the course of this event have remained far below levels that could contribute to long-term health risk.

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, a federal public health agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is partnering with the EPA as a third-party resource dedicated to reviewing the environmental data provided by Unified Command and will communicate findings once they are available.

Claims activities update: Approximately 200 claims representatives, including call center operators, field claim adjusters and claims processors, remain in the area. Field claim adjusters are in the field from 8:00 a.m. to one hour before sundown daily in the areas of highest impact. Claims are divided into two general categories: (1) evacuation-related claims cover lodging and meals/incidental expenses and (2) property/personal property damage claims cover damages to homes and other personal property.

Claims Processing Centers at **511 Grigsby Ave. in Port Neches** and **250 Dowlen Rd. in Beaumont** are completing claims by appointment from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. daily. Residents can submit claims and schedule appointments to meet with claims representatives by calling the **Community Assistance Helpline at (866) 601-5880**.

Evacuation claims information: To get a head start on the **Evacuation Claim Form**, residents may click on [HYPERLINK "<https://tinyurl.com/rsno5ay>"] and complete the form online and submit supporting documentation. This [HYPERLINK "<https://form.jotform.com/93328046922156>"] is for residents who were in designated evacuation areas and have not already completed an Evacuation Claim form with a claims representative. Completing the [HYPERLINK "<https://form.jotform.com/93328046922156>"] in advance can help expedite the claims process.

Property claims information: Claims adjusters are conducting damage inspections in the high impact areas. Claims processing center personnel are making calls and scheduling appointments for the medium and low impact areas. Residents are requested to have the following information with them when submitting property-related claims (by phone or in-person):

- A Photo ID (driver's license, utility bill, U.S. Military ID) and one of the following address verification documents for adults listed in the household is required:
 - Mail, lease/mortgage payment, passport, voter registration card, property tax records

Commented [AA9]: Are you saying that the measurements were instantaneous or sustained and then dissipated?

Did a strike team confirm the measurements?

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Commented [AA10]: And are they above the odor threshold for butadiene (TCEQ, 0.230 ppm)?

Commented [AA11]: Ask them if they are reviewing the plan or just the data. Where is this "Response Plan"

Commented [AA12]: "available collected"? Or are they reviewing the collected data...

Commented [AA13]: Unified Command?

The helpline continues to experience a high volume of calls. We sincerely appreciate callers' patience and understanding. A claims process handout is available for download on [HYPERLINK "http://www.portnechesreponse.com/"].

Updates and information continue to be posted on the web at [HYPERLINK "http://www.portnechesresponse.com/"], on Facebook at [HYPERLINK "https://www.facebook.com/portneches.response.1"] and on Twitter at PortNechesUC. EPA website: www.response.epa.gov/south4groupfire

Commented [AA14]: EPA website? If this is a UC press release, then we should include all the locations for our information.

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